

Remarks

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-41 are pending in the application, with claims 1 and 25 being the independent claims. Claims 22 and 39 are amended to correct minor informalities. Specifically, in claims 22 and 39, the term "the stage" was replaced with "--said stage--". In addition, Figures 1A, 1B, and 2 are amended as required by the Office Action (discussed below). These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that a Notice of Allowance be issued for allowed claims 1-41.

Objection to the Drawings

The Office Action states on page 2:

The drawings are objected to because Figs. 1A, 1B and 2 must be labeled as "Prior Art". Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application.

Figures 1A, 1B, and 2 are amended as shown on the accompanying annotated drawing sheets submitted herewith in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(d). Specifically, "(PRIOR ART)" was added to each of these figures as requested in the Office Action. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Formal replacement drawings for Figures 1A, 1B, and 2-5 are also submitted herewith in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(c). The formal replacement drawings for Figures 1A,

1B, and 2 include the amendments made herein. The entry of the formal replacement drawings is respectfully requested.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the objection to the drawings and that it be withdrawn.

Response to Request for Information

The Office Action requests on page 3 that Applicant "submit any known references or documents showing a similar stage, bearing, reaction mass arrangement as claimed with or without the bellows." Applicant wishes to point out that knowledge of similar arrangements has been disclosed in the specification and drawings. Additionally, an internet search using the Google™ search engine resulted in some documents that show or describe lithography systems with stages and "balance" or "reaction" masses. These documents are listed on a Form PTO-1449 submitted herewith along with an Information Disclosure Statement. Applicant submits that this response to the Examiner's Request for Information is in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.105 and MPEP § 704. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that this response be accepted as a complete reply to the Request for Information.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and/or rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and/or rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

Santiago E. del Puerto
Appl. No. 10/648,263

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appl. No. 10/648,263; Filed: August 27, 2003
Dkt. No. 1857.1690000; Group Art Unit: 2851
Inventor: Santiago E. del Puerto; Tel.: (202) 371-2600
Title: Bearing Arrangement for Reaction Mass in a Controlled Environment

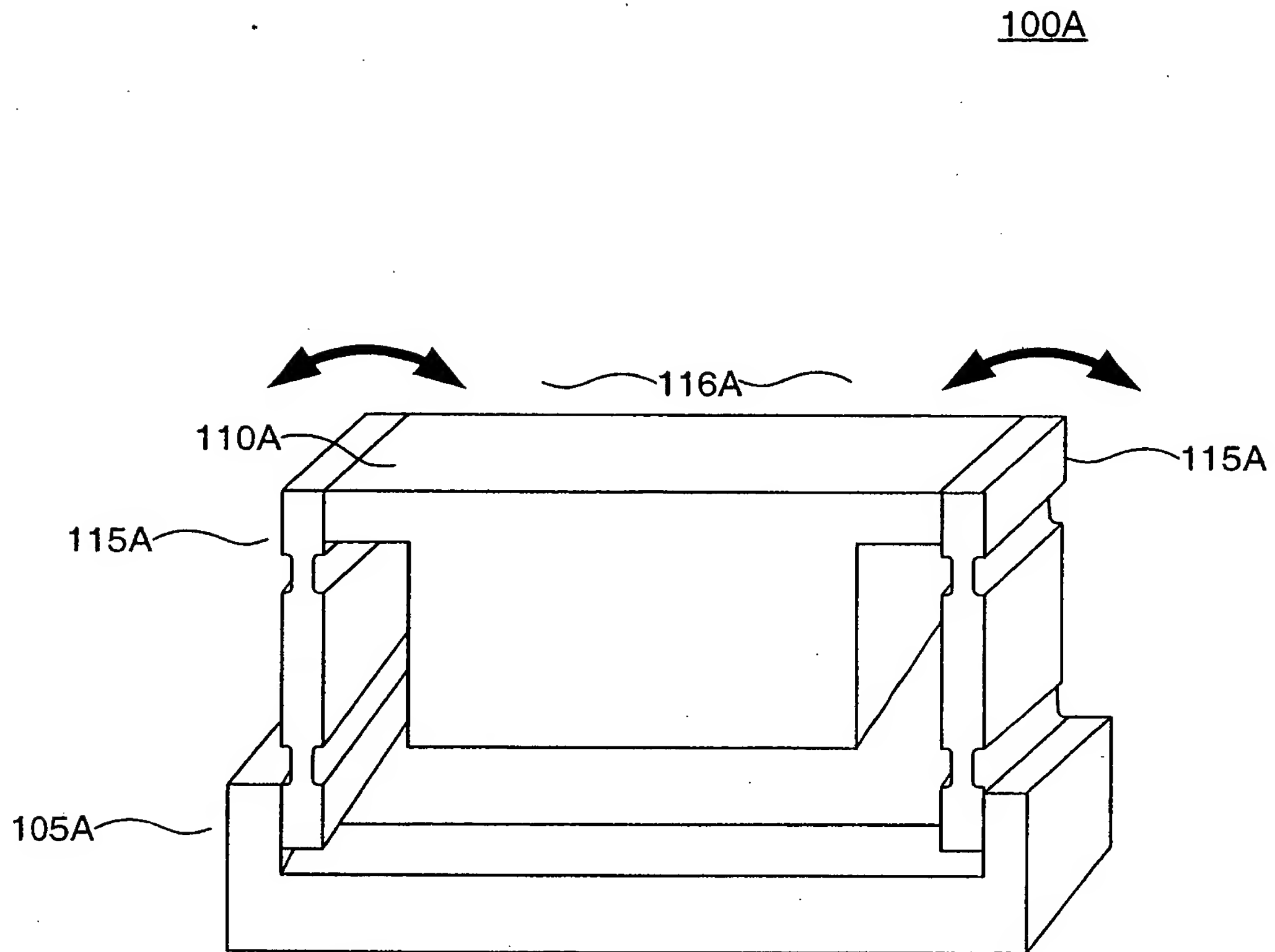


FIG. 1A
(PRIOR ART)

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100B

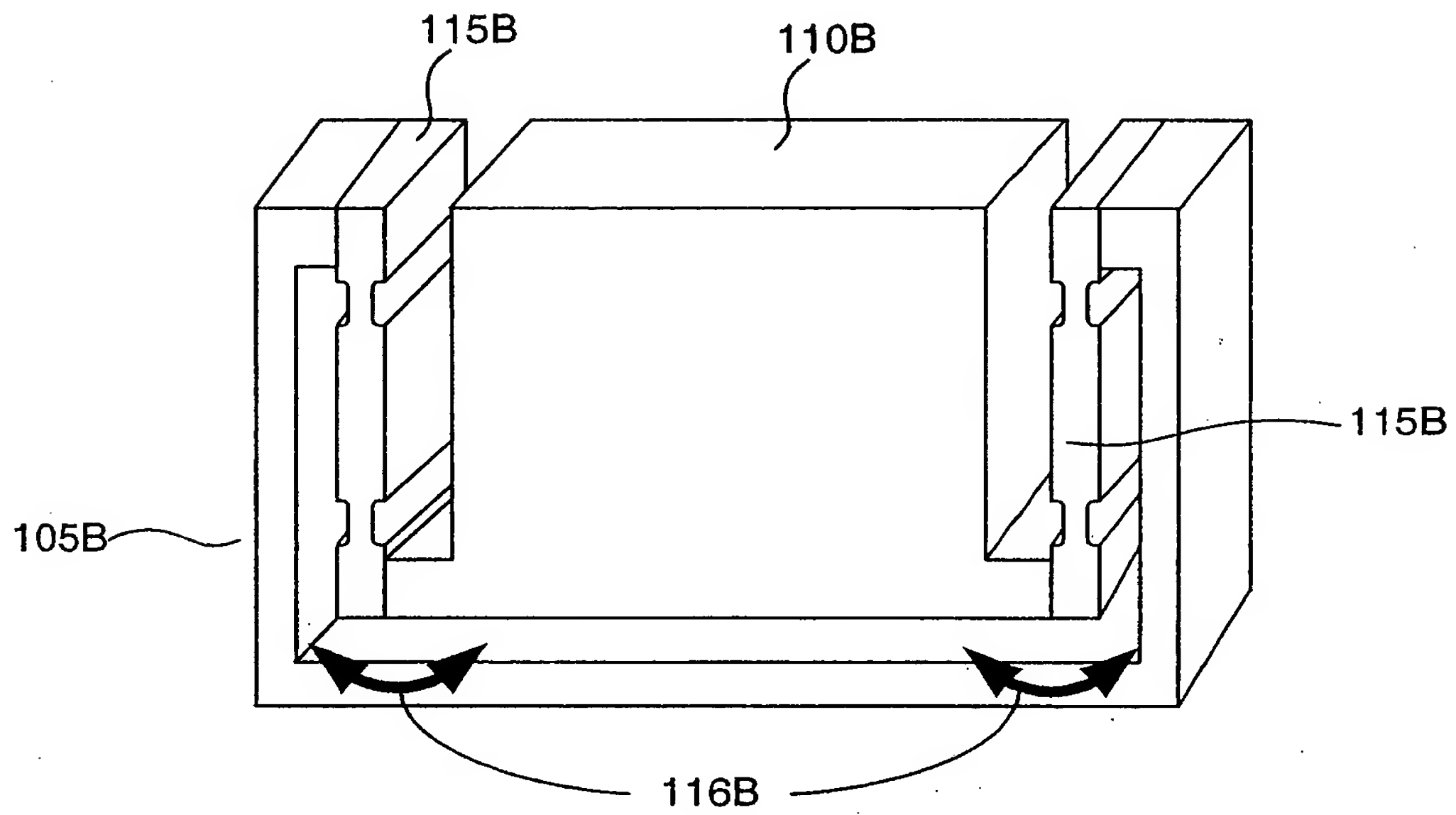


FIG. 1B
 (PRIOR ART)

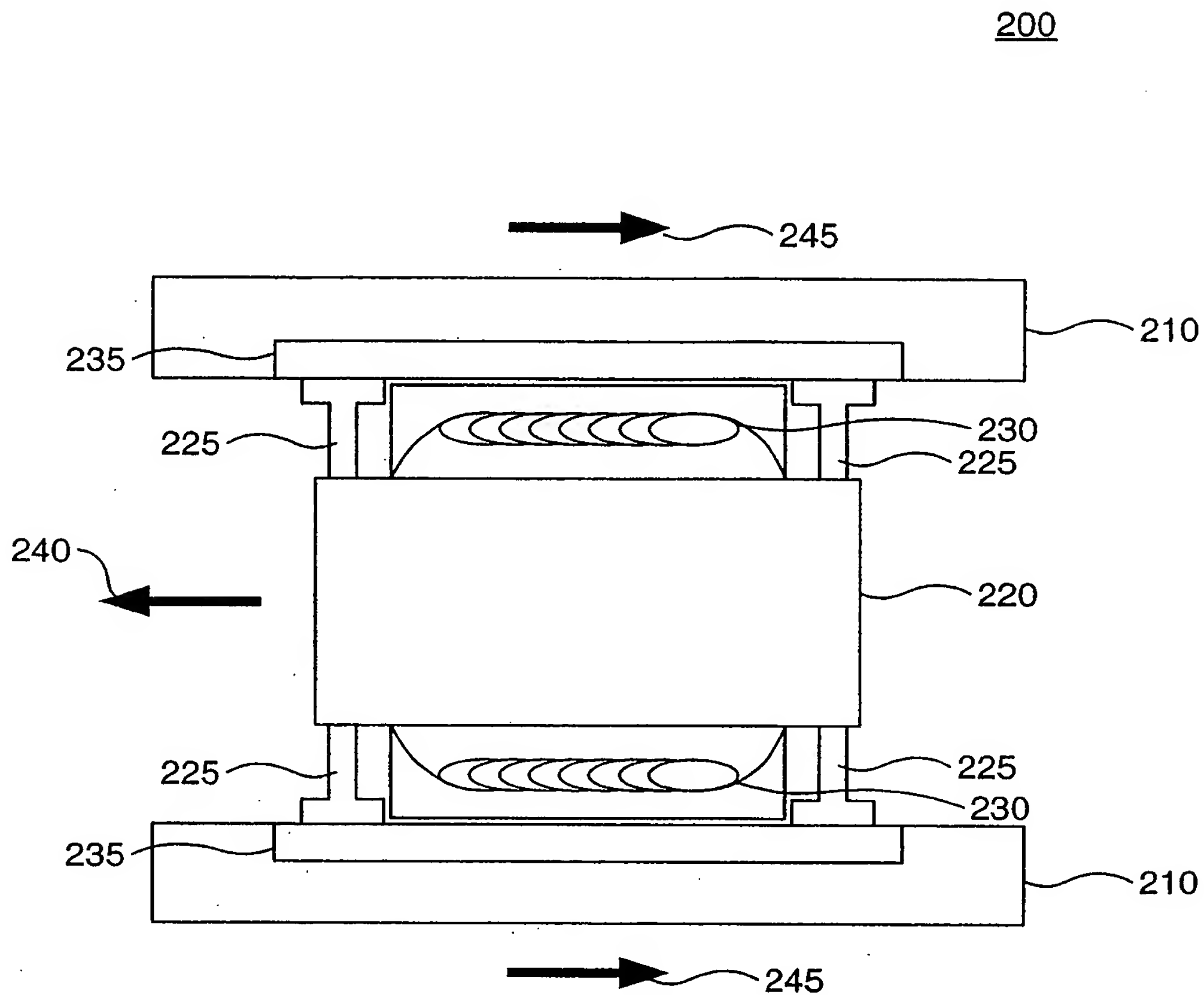


FIG. 2
 (PRIOR ART)